

3.12 Human Health and Safety

This section presents a description of general hazards present in Modoc County and County facilities related to health and safety. These discussions are presented as a baseline perspective for determining the potential degree of impacts associated with human health and safety that may be triggered by the proposed project. Areas of concern (discussed in Section 4.12) are primarily associated with hazardous materials contamination and fires. Applicable regulations on associated hazards to human health and safety are also provided.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Four basic hazard conditions are listed in the Modoc County Safety Element: geologic hazards, seismic hazards, wildland fire hazards, and flood hazards. Geologic and seismic hazards are discussed in Section 3.2 Geology.

Fire Hazards

Large areas of Modoc County are susceptible to wildland fire hazards. Very high fire hazards characterize about 40% of the County. Aside from state Responsibility Areas and the areas under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service (USFS), there are areas that fall within a local responsibility area. In these areas, response to calls for service would come from the local districts, although a system of mutual aid agreements exists that permits local districts to call upon other districts. The Alturas Rural Fire Department covers the largest fire district in the County. Fire activity for the Alturas Rural Fire Department in 1998 is presented in Table 3.12-1.

The Canby Fire District #62 as well as the California Division of Forestry (CDF) have jurisdiction over the Town of Canby. The Canby Department operates on volunteer service. The project area extends into a "light fuel" area, with flammable grasses, for wildland fires.

Table 3.12-1: 1998 Activity for Alturas Rural Fire Department

Activity Type	Number	Percentage
Emergency Medical Service	65	58.6%
Non-Structure Fires	36	32.4%
Mutual Aid	6	5.4%
Structure Fires	2	1.8%
Haz-Mat	1	0.9%
False Alarms or Systems Malfunctions	1	0.9%
Total Runs for 1998	111	100.0%

SOURCE: Fire Department EMS 2002

Flood Hazards

There are no significant flood hazards in Modoc County. Most areas subject to inundation are currently water bodies, uninhabited, or in publicly-owned lands. The County does not participate in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Program, and has zoned flood hazard areas designated on the Federal Insurance Rate Maps.

FEMA has designated the eastern, southeastern, and southern portions of Canby as flood hazard zones (FEMA 1984). These are agricultural areas and are potentially inundated by the Pit River. A portion of the discharge pipeline route south of State Route 299 until the discharge point would be located in the designated flood hazard area.

Hazardous Materials

No hazardous waste treatment facilities are located within Modoc County. Hazardous waste generated in the County must be shipped elsewhere for treatment or disposal.

Significant volumes of hazardous materials are commonly associated with intensive land uses such as industrial or mining uses. The proposed project is located where minimal industrial uses have occurred. A lumbermill existed in Canby during the 1940's and 1950's. Existing land uses are primarily agricultural.

REGULATORY SETTING

The current regulatory framework relevant to hazards and human health encompasses process risk related to the use of hazardous materials and management of risks from hazardous materials that have been or could be released into the environment. The use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes are regulated through a network of sometimes overlapping federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

Businesses are required by law to handle hazardous materials appropriately and train employees to manage them safely. Hazardous waste laws impose "cradle to grave" liability, requiring generators of hazardous waste to handle it in a manner that protects human health the environment to the greatest extent possible. Both federal and state laws have established programs to identify hazardous waste sites, to require site remediation, and to recover the costs of site remediation from polluters. The following discussion briefly summarizes regulations that must be complied with regardless of ownership of the facility.

Federal

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations contained in Title 29 CFR contain employee safety provisions that are designed to minimize the hazards for employees in the workplace.

Through the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets standards for drinking water quality and oversees the states, localities, and water suppliers who implement those standards. The Safe Water Act Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) have been used as basis for permit conditions by the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board.

In 1990, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) promulgated rules establishing Phase I of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water program. The Storm Water Phase II Rule extends coverage of the NPDES storm water program to certain "small" MS4s located in "urbanized areas" (UAs), and on a case-by-case basis those small MS4s (including those disturbing between 1 to 5

acres) located outside UAs that the NPDES permitting authority designates. MS4s refer to operations serving 100,000 or greater; the Canby project would serve about 160 people and would not be considered an MS4. The project would also not require a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) under the NPDES program as the project (1) would not involve significant amounts of ground disturbance and potential for run-off, and (2) would not be not large enough to warrant a SWPPP (Rohrbach 2002a).

State

Cal-OSHA regulations codified in Title 8 contain employee safety provisions that are designed to minimize the hazards for employees in the workplace.

Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) defines and categorizes hazardous materials and wastes. The term "hazardous materials" refers to substances, which, if released in an unregulated manner, can be harmful to people, animals, property, and the environment. Title 22 defines a hazardous material as:

"... a substance or combination of substances which, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical, chemical or infectious characteristics, may either (1) cause, or significantly contribute to, an increase in mortality or an increase in serious irreversible, or incapacitating reversible illness; or (2) pose a substantial present of potential hazard to human health or environment when improperly treated, stored, transported or disposed of or otherwise managed."

Hazardous wastes are categorized in Title 22 as either Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) hazardous waste or non-RCRA hazardous waste, depending on whether the waste is regulated under RCRA. Geothermal wastes are not regulated by RCRA; however, they are regulated by Title 22 requirements. Title 22 lists chemical compounds that are presumed to make a material or waste hazardous; these compounds are considered hazardous unless specifically excluded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The California Toxics Rule (CTR) contains water quality standards applicable to the project discharge. It sets the Human Health Limit for mercury at 50 ng/L (this limit has been recognized as not protective of aquatic life or species).

Local

The Modoc County Environmental Health Department is responsible for enforcing a variety of hazardous material, waste, safety, noise and other related requirements. Many communities have established Certified Unified Program Agencies (CUPA's). The intent of the CUPA program is to consolidate and make consistent the reporting requirements, permit format, inspection criteria, enforcement standards and fees for the following six hazardous materials programs:

- Hazardous Waste Generator & Onsite Hazardous Waste Treatment
- Aboveground Storage Tanks - Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure Plan (SPCC)
- Underground Storage Tanks
- Hazardous Material Release Response Plans and Inventories
- California Accidental Release Prevention Program
- Uniform Fire Code Hazardous Material Plans and Inventories

3: AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Modoc County adopted an emergency preparedness plan in 1981. The purpose of the plan is threefold: (1) to provide a basis for the conduct and coordination of operations and the management of critical resources during emergencies; (2) to establish a mutual understanding of the authority, responsibilities, function, and operations of civil government during emergencies; and (3) to provide a basis for incorporating into the County emergency organization non-governmental agencies and organizations having resources necessary to meet foreseeable emergency requirements. The emergency plan sets forth procedures to be taken in emergencies, including, but not limited to, floods, fires, earthquakes, hazardous materials spills. The plan does not include a description of evacuation routes.